

Higher Degrees by Research Procedure 1 Admissions

Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(1) Nil

Section 2 - Scope / Application

(2) This Procedure outlines Higher Degree by Research (HDR) academic criteria for admission, English language requirements, method for applying and the assessment and offers process.

Section 3 - Definitions

(3) Local (domestic onshore) applicants - Australian or New Zealand citizens or Australian Permanent Residents.

(4) International applicants - A [temporary](#) resident (visa status) of Australia or a [permanent resident](#) (visa status) of New Zealand, or a resident or citizen of any other country.

(5) Higher Degree by Research (HDR)

Section 4 - Policy Statement

(6) [Higher Degree by Research Policy](#)

(7) [Admissions Policy](#)

(8) [Enrolments Policy](#)

Section 5 - Procedures

Part A - HDR Admissions: Overview

(9) The admission of an applicant to a research degree at Victoria University (VU) involves consideration of a number of factors, including whether:

- a. the applicant meets the prescribed minimum requirements for entry to the research degree;
- b. the applicant has sufficient disciplinary preparation and demonstrated research capacity to undertake the proposed research project;
- c. the initial research proposal submitted by the applicant (or the research area proposed by the applicant for professional doctorates) appears to be viable (including consideration of its alignment with the University's and College/Centre/Institute's current and emerging research areas);

- d. appropriate supervision is available for the proposed research;
- e. adequate facilities, infrastructure and project support can be provided for the proposed research by the relevant College/Centre/Institute;
- f. places are available in the College/Centre/Institute to which the applicant is applying;
- g. the admission of the applicant and acceptance of the proposed area of research contravenes any Australian law, for example [Australian Autonomous Sanctions](#).

Part B - Academic criteria for admission into research degrees

Doctor of Philosophy

(10) To be eligible for admission a person must be able to demonstrate academic achievement and preparation in a relevant discipline to a level that is sufficient to undertake doctoral level research. This can be demonstrated by one or more of the following academic standards:

- a. a Masters by Research degree will be automatically deemed as being equivalent to a H1 grade;
- b. a Masters by Coursework degree with minor thesis with average grades of at least H2A/Distinction (equivalent to above 70 per cent on the VU grading scale);
- c. a four year bachelors degree or an honours degree with average grades of at least H2A/Distinction for the final year (above 70 per cent on VU grading scale);
- d. enrolment in a Masters by Research degree and evidence of exceptional ability in the conduct of the first stages in a project; or
- e. an equivalent combination of academic and research achievements, as determined by the relevant College Director, Research Training (and, if applying to study based in a Centre or Institute, the relevant Centre/Institute Director); and
- f. fulfilled any other conditions relating to prerequisite study which the University may have imposed in respect of admission to the research degree.

Masters by Research

(11) To be eligible for admission a person must be able to demonstrate academic achievement and preparation to a level in a relevant discipline that is sufficient to undertake masters-level research. This can be demonstrated by one or more of the following academic standards:

- a. a three year bachelors degree with average grades of at least H2A/Distinction for the final year (equivalent to above 70 per cent on the VU grading scale);
- b. a four year bachelors degree or an honours degree with average grades of at least H2A/Distinction for the final year (equivalent to above 70 per cent on VU grading scale);
- c. a Master by Coursework degree with average grades of at least H2A/Distinction (equivalent to above 70 per cent on the VU grading scale);
- d. qualified for any other award judged by the University to be of a relevant and appropriate standard and have:
 - i. produced evidence of professional experience through which he or she has developed applied knowledge of the relevant field of study, and which satisfies the University that he or she has the capacity to undertake study for a masters level research degree; and
 - ii. fulfilled any other conditions relating to prerequisite study which the University may have imposed in respect of admission to the research degree.

Professional doctorates

Doctor of Business Administration

(12) To be eligible for admission a person must be able to demonstrate academic achievement and preparation to a level that is sufficient to undertake Professional Doctorate-level research. This can be demonstrated by one or more of the following academic standards:

- a. a completed Masters of Business, or equivalent, with an average grade of at least H2A/Distinction (equivalent to above 70 per cent on the VU grading scale), plus a minimum of two years appropriate work experience as determined by the College Director, Research Training;
- b. evidence of professional experience in the relevant discipline through which he or she has developed applied knowledge of the relevant field of study, and which satisfies the University that he or she has the capacity to undertake study for a Professional Doctorate-level research degree;
- c. fulfilment of any other conditions relating to prerequisite study which the University may have imposed in respect of his or her admission to the research degree.

Doctor of Education

(13) To be eligible for admission a person must be able to demonstrate academic achievement and preparation to a level that is sufficient to undertake Professional Doctorate-level research. This can be demonstrated by one or more of the following academic standards:

- a. a completed four year Bachelor of Education or Honours degree with average grades of at least H2A/Distinction for the final year (above 70 per cent on VU grading scale), Master of Education (Research), or Master of Education (Coursework with a minor thesis) with average grades of at least H2A/Distinction (above 70 per cent on VU grading scale), or an acceptable alternative Masters qualification, plus a minimum of three years professional experience;
- b. evidence of professional experience through which he or she has developed applied knowledge of the relevant field of study, and which satisfies the University that he or she has the capacity to undertake study for a Professional Doctorate-level research degree;
- c. evidence of relevant professional work experience in the respective discipline to the required minimum level for that course as stipulated by the College;
- d. fulfilment of any other conditions relating to prerequisite study which the University may have imposed in respect of his or her admission to the research degree.

Part C - English language requirements

All applicants

(14) All applicants for HDR are required to demonstrate competency in English sufficient to work at HDR level, through meeting one or more of the following criteria:

- a. successful completion of one of the degrees specified in the academic prerequisites for each HDR, as outlined in Part B, with English as the language of instruction and assessment, and undertaken in a predominantly English-speaking context;
- b. having been taught for two of the past five years at a tertiary institution where English was the primary language of instruction. This will apply only if the qualification was delivered in:
 - i. Australia; or
 - ii. a specified English-speaking country (Canada [excluding Quebec], Fiji, Ireland, Kenya, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States America and Zambia).

- c. evidence that they have achieved the VU levels of [English Language Proficiency](#); or
- d. documented evidence of English proficiency equivalent to the above.

Additional English language requirements - International applicants

(15) In addition to meeting the University's requirements, international applicants who will be studying in Melbourne must satisfy the English language qualifying requirement for gaining an entry visa to Australia for applicants from their country.

Part D - Method of Application process

(16) All applications must include:

- a. certified copies of academic transcripts;
- b. certified copies of qualification award certificates;
- c. CV with academic referees listed;
- d. certified copies of proof of citizenship;
- e. a brief initial research proposal (for all Masters and PhD degrees) or a research outline of 200 words for Professional Doctorate applicants;
- f. name of a proposed supervisor;
- g. evidence of relevant professional experience where this is a requirement for entry.

Local applicants

(17) Local applicants for all HDR (Masters by Research, Doctor of Philosophy degrees and Professional Doctorates) must submit an application on the [Apply for Research form](#) with supporting documentation to the Graduate Research Centre (GRC).

International applicants

(18) International applicants (non Australian/ New Zealand or non-Australian Permanent Residents) can apply via three different methods depending on their sponsorship status:

- a. apply as a full fee paying student via the [Expression of Interest \(EOI\)](#) or a nominated agent;
- b. apply via the Victoria University International (VUI) online portal if the applicant has fee and/or living stipend sponsorship;
- c. apply via the Victoria University Graduate Research Scholarship online application form if initially applying for the main Victoria University scholarship round.

Part E - Assessment of applications

(19) The GRC will consider applications that include all documentation as stated in clause 15 and will make preliminary assessments as to whether an applicant meets the minimum academic admission criteria.

(20) Incomplete applications will not be considered. Applicants will be informed that their application will not be processed until a complete application has been received.

(21) Applicants who are assessed as not meeting one or more of the selection criteria will be informed normally within 20 University business days of the decision having been made that their application has not been successful.

(22) All qualifications will be assessed for equivalency in the Australian education system according to [Commonwealth](#)

[Government guidelines](#) and VU's grading equivalence scales.

(23) Applications that are assessed to meet minimum academic and English requirements will then be forwarded to the relevant College for assessment in relation to the academic requirements outlined in the HDR Policy. Where an applicant has applied to work within a specific Centre or Institute based within one of VU's Colleges, the Director, Research Training or nominee of the Centre/Institute will also be involved in the academic assessment of the application.

(24) All applicants for the PhD, whose previous degree(s) do not include a research component (such as a minor thesis, a thesis, or a research project taking up to 25 per cent of the final year) will also need to include research writing samples such as:

- a. peer reviewed publications; or
- b. a summary of a thesis; or
- c. a research project review.

(25) The final decision on an offer of admission rests with the College Director, Research Training.

Advanced Standing

(26) In cases where an applicant does not meet the stipulated normal minimum entry standards, but wishes to make the case for their admission on the basis of Advanced Standing, this case must be fully documented in their application. In these circumstances the application should include evidence of:

- a. academic and research development through credentialed and non-credentialed academic and professional learning equivalent to that normally required for entry; and
- b. demonstrated capacity to successfully undertake research within the relevant discipline, at least to the level normally required for entry to the course for which the applicant is applying.

(27) Having reviewed this evidence the College Director, Research Training will be responsible for determining whether a satisfactory case for admission has been made to a level that takes into account the Colleges capacity and the applicant's research alignment to admission in the course proposed.

Advanced Candidature

(28) Admission with Advanced Candidature will be available provided an applicant has been admitted for Candidature at another university for the same project being proposed in their application to VU and can provide evidence that they were making satisfactory progress in the program at the other university (see Part A in [Higher Degrees by Research Procedure 3 Pre-Candidature and Candidature](#)).

Collaboration with external research bodies

(29) Applicants who wish to conduct part, or all, of their research using facilities through their employment, or in conjunction with a research body external to the University, must provide written proof of the organisation's agreement (including the research being conducted, the degree of support and the facilities and resources to be provided).

(30) Such arrangements with organisations external to the University must be made under the stewardship of the supervisor/s and include consideration and agreement about:

- a. matters associated with [intellectual property ownership and rights](#); and
- b. the ownership, storage, retention of and access to research data generated during the project.

Part F - Offers of admission

Local applicants - Research Training Scheme and full-fee paying places

(31) Successful local applicants for HDR will be considered for a place funded under the [Commonwealth Research Training Scheme](#) (RTS). An RTS place exempts the candidate from paying tuition fees, however every student at VU is required to pay the [Student Services and Amenities Fee \(SSAF\)](#). In exceptional circumstances, such as the proposed principal supervisor being on leave, or the supervisor being overloaded, the RTS offer may be deferred until the following semester.

(32) Where an application for admission is approved by the College/Centre/Institute, but the applicant has not been successful in being awarded an RTS place, he or she will be offered the option of taking up a full-fee paying place.

(33) Applicants for local scholarships who have been awarded a scholarship are automatically awarded an RTS place.

(34) All other applications for places received for the forthcoming semester will be considered in relation to College/Centre/Institute capacity after scholarship places have been finalised.

(35) VU staff who are applying for admission to a research degree are also governed by the [RTS guidelines](#).

(36) If a local applicant is accepted by the College/Centre/Institute, the GRC will send the applicant an offer letter, which will include:

- a. a request to provide evidence of citizenship;
- b. a request to provide certified hardcopies of academic documents;
- c. details regarding the compulsory Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF);
- d. the date by which enrolment must occur;
- e. the provisional Principal Supervisor (other than for professional doctorates whose supervision arrangements may be made closer to the completion of the coursework phase); major course progression requirements, such as that related to performance in required coursework;
- f. conditions of any scholarship if applicable.

International applicants

(37) VUI will send successful international applicants accepted by the College/Centre/Institute, an offer letter, which will include:

- a. any conditions which must be met before a full offer is made;
- b. the fees (and/or details of any agreed fee scholarship arrangements);
- c. the date by which enrolment must occur;
- d. arrangements for health cover;
- e. the provisional Principal Supervisor (other than for professional doctorates whose supervision arrangements are made at the end of the coursework phase);
- f. course code;
- g. major course progression requirements, such as that related to performance in required coursework;
- h. conditions of any scholarship if applicable.

(38) VUI will issue a rejection letter to applicants who have not been accepted by the College.

Acceptance of International offers

(39) Applicants who intend to accept an offer must return the Offer Acceptance form and pay the required fees before being issued with a Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE). The student is required to provide a CoE to immigration authorities in order to be granted the appropriate student visa

(40) On or prior to arrival the applicant must advise the University of their arrival date. VUI, in collaboration with the GRC, will make arrangements for enrolment once the applicant has arrived in Australia.

Part G - Appeals against admissions process

(41) All applicants for HDR dissatisfied with an admission process made in relation to their application may appeal (on the grounds of process) under the VU [Student Appeals Regulations](#).

Section 6 - Guidelines

(42) Nil

Status and Details

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Effective Date	5th May 2015
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Accountable Officer	Andrew Hill Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research & Impact Andrew.Hill@vu.edu.au
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Higher Degree by Research (HDR)" - A Higher Degree by Research (HDR) is a postgraduate award at Master or Doctoral level at AQF 9 or 10 respectively, of which two thirds or more is research and research training. The major part of assessment of these courses must be in the form of reporting the outcomes of a research project/s conducted as the research component of the degree. A HDR may also include a coursework component, which is one or more accredited units of study designed to address and area(s) of content and/or skill development within the HDR program.